



A Bad Character

By Deepti Kapoor

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Our narrator is “twenty and untouched” when her mother dies. Sent by her absentee father to live with a relative in a modest New Delhi apartment, she is ill-equipped to resist the allure of the rich and rebellious young man who approaches her one day at a cafe. He is a few years older, and from a different social class, but they both yearn to break free of tradition. As they drive around Delhi—eating, making love, falling apart—he introduces her to an India that she never knew existed, and will never be able to forget.

Told in a voice at once gritty and lyrical, *A Bad Character* is an astounding book, an intimate and raw exploration of female transformation in contemporary India, and an unforgettable hymn to a dangerous, exhilarating city.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Searing, intoxicating . . . The story of a young woman’s hunger to be free.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

“A fiery, incandescent debut [that] artfully captures the perilous desires of a woman alone in New Delhi. Kapoor’s novel smolders with submerged rage, pain, abandonment and erotic desire. . . Promises great things to come.” —*The Huffington Post*

“A dark, hypnotic story.” —Hanya Yanagihara, author of *A Little Life*

“[Kapoor] writes with a keening, furious sorrow that rang in my ears well after I finished the book.” —Sam Sacks, *The Wall Street Journal*

“Marguerite Duras meets new India.” —Vogue.com

“*Captivating* . . . *A Bad Character* echoes Nabokov’s *Lolita* with a story about the sexual initiation of a young woman, but offers a female perspective, one that doesn’t pull any punches. . . Literary voices like Kapoor’s . . . are now more crucial than ever.” —*The Rumpus*

“Spellbinding: Here is a novel about sex, about drugs, about a city on the brink of awe-inspiring and terrible change.” —Nell Freudenberger, author of *The Newlyweds*

“India, once again. Its dark underbelly—flashing images of poverty and squalor, corruption and drugs and, above all, battered lives . . . Here’s a young woman, named Deepti Kapoor, picking up where the others have left off, adding something here (a female protagonist), subtracting something there (sentiment), splashing into our lives like the beginning of the monsoon hitting Delhi’s streets. And the irony of it all? By the last page you have to ask yourself who is the bad character of her title: the unnamed female narrator, or the man whose life she believes she has unpacked so carefully.” —*Counterpunch*

“A stylishly written, powerfully moving love story. . . What *Twilight in Delhi* is to the 20th century Indian novel, *A Bad Character* is to the 21st: the essence of India’s corrupt capital, brilliantly and darkly distilled. This is a remarkable debut from a major new talent.” —William Dalrymple, author of *The Last Mughal*

“Riveting . . . Kapoor’s debut novel is a coming-of-age tale as complex, gritty and frankly terrifying as Delhi, the city that forms its backdrop.” —*Bustle*

“An intimate, raw exploration of [a] profound transformation.” —*Booklist*

“Sharply told.” —*Largehearted Boy*

“Haunting . . . A beguiling, hallucinatory experience, at once unsettling and intimate. . . *A Bad Character* is an astounding book: read it with the scent of diesel in your nostrils and red dust in your mouth.” —*The New Indian Express*

“A poignant and impressionistic portrait of the end of adolescence and a changing world.” —*The Telegraph*

(London)

“Impressive in its . . . evocation of a dazzling, dangerous cityscape.” —*Kirkus*

About the Author

Deepti Kapoor grew up in Northern India and attended college in New Delhi, where she worked for several years as a journalist. *A Bad Character* is her first novel. She lives in Goa.

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My boyfriend died when I was twenty-one. His body was left lying broken on the highway out of Delhi while the sun rose in the desert to the east. I wasn't there, I never saw it. But plenty of others saw, in the trucks that passed by without stopping and from the roadside dhaba where he'd been drinking all night.

Then they wrote about him in the paper. Twelve lines buried in the middle pages, one line standing out, the last one, in which a cop he'd never met said to the reporter, He was known to us, he was a bad character.

It's a phrase they use sometimes, what some people still say. It's what they'll say about me too, when they know what I've done.

Him and me,
(long dead).

Sitting in the café in Khan Market the day we met, in April, when the indestructible heat was rising in the year, sinking in the day, the sun setting very red, sacrificing itself to the squat teeth of buildings stretching back round the stinking Yamuna into Uttar Pradesh.

The city is a furnace on days like these, the aching heart of a cremation ground.
.?.?.

But inside the café you wouldn't know it; inside it's cool, the AC is on, the windows are politely shuttered, it could be any time of day in here; in here you could forget the city, its ceaseless noise, its endless quarry of people. You could feel safe.

Only he's staring at me.

Twenty and untouched. It's a sin. For twenty years I've been waiting for this one thing.
Idha.

In the mirror.

I give myself a name, I wear it out. Lunar, serpentine, desirous. A charm that protects me.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Glenn Pryor:

Typically the book *A Bad Character* will bring one to the new experience of reading the book. The author style to describe the idea is very unique. In the event you try to find new book to read, this book very ideal to you. The book *A Bad Character* is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from

official web site, so you can quickly to read the book.

Jessica Bradburn:

The book A Bad Character has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of profit. The book was written by the very famous author. Tom makes some research before write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can find the point easily after scanning this book.

Stephen Mosley:

The book untitled A Bad Character contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains the girl idea with easy technique. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read it. The book was written by famous author. The author provides you in the new time of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can start their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice read.

Juan Gilbert:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, magazine, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to your account is A Bad Character this book consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some analysis when he makes this book. That's why this book suited all of you.

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